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EDUS 515 – Prof. Duncan  
 Independent Project Introduction/Reflection   
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I chose this lesson plan because I enjoy cooking and especially baking sweet treats. Since actually cooking or baking would not be possible in our class or in most classrooms, I opted to do a no-bake cookie recipe. I do not feel that I have the culinary prowess to teach a class based on a specific cooking skill as some of my colleagues did, and so I found a way to connect this activity with a more “traditional” content area: math. Cooking is one of the most common and basic uses for fractions in “the real world,” so connecting cooking to a unit on fractions was a logical choice.

I think that this activity relates to students’ real life experiences because it shows them how the math skills they are learning (fractions) are actually used in every-day life. It can be difficult to provide authentic, meaningful tasks in math classes because students do not yet have a need for many of the skills they are learning. After all, most middle/high school students do not yet have to balance checkbooks, calculate taxes or estimate personal finances. This cooking activity shows them a meaningful way to apply the skills that they are learning. Seeing that math is actually useful outside of school will help to motivate students. The activity is also self-rewarding, since students will only be able to enjoy the treats if they participate in the activity.

The main methodology used in this lesson would be cooperative learning. Students work in groups to calculate answers, and all team members have specific jobs to complete to contribute to the success of the team. In this way, all students have a chance to meaningfully participate. This particular activity would come at the end of a unit which would also include other methodologies such as direct instruction. In this lesson, students are not directly using technology. However, technology could be incorporated by using a Promethian board presentation and/or document camera to assist with explaining directions, reviewing the recipe, and reviewing the mathematical calculations.

My activity presentation was very different from how the activity would actually play out in a classroom. The main adjustment was the focus of the activity – this is a math lesson, so students in a real classroom would focus a significant amount of time on the problem-solving and fraction calculations. In our class, I did this work ahead of time. I also pre-measured the ingredients for our class, which totally changed the way that materials were distributed. In a real classroom, I would make individual containers of each ingredient for each group in plastic storage containers or baggies, but would give each group a large enough quantity of each ingredient to still require them to measure. Ingredients and measuring cups/spoons could be sorted out into trays or bins for each group. This way, distribution would not take up much of the activity time. Even so, I would only want to do this kind of activity with a class that already understood basic procedures for group work, clean-up, etc. With this particular activity, I would expect that most middle/high school students would be enthusiastic and cooperative, since getting to eat the finished product would be fairly motivating for most.

In doing this project, I learned that I find the lesson implementation much more difficult than the lesson planning. Coming up with ideas for activities and explaining the lesson plan (even the detailed Holy Family format) was simple. Reviewing all of the practical considerations – how to complete the activity in time, how to distribute materials, how to handle misbehavior, etc. – took far more time. This is something that I work on daily to improve my teaching in my own classroom.